

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

I claim:

1. A hand-held flossing device, comprising:
 - a housing having a handle and a head, the head having a top and a bottom;
 - a dental floss supply disposed within the handle;
 - a winding gear rotatably mounted within the handle and configured to securely hold a free end of the dental floss supply, the winding gear having at least a portion accessible from outside of the housing;
 - a first elongate tine and a second elongate tine extending outwardly from the bottom of the head, the tines diverging relative to one another as they extend outwardly;
 - an exit aperture formed in the first tine and an entrance aperture formed in the second tine;
 - a floss path extending from the dental floss supply, through the handle, through the first tine and out the exit aperture, into the entrance aperture, through the second tine, and to the winding gear, the winding gear configured to advance floss along the floss path; and
 - a lock disposed along the floss path and moveable between a locked position and an unlocked position to selectively inhibit the advancement of floss along the floss path.
2. The hand-held flossing device of Claim 1, wherein a length of each of the first and second tines is less than a length of the floss extending between the exit aperture and the entrance aperture.
3. The hand-held flossing device of Claim 1, wherein rotation of the winding gear tensions the floss extending between the exit aperture and the entrance aperture.
4. The hand-held flossing device of Claim 1, wherein the entrance aperture and/or exit aperture is tapered.
5. The hand-held flossing device of Claim 1, wherein the housing is configured to allow a user to replace the floss supply with a new floss supply.

6. The hand-held flossing device of Claim 1, wherein the lock is slidable between an engaged position and a disengaged position, the lock having a passage formed therethrough.

7. The hand-held flossing device of Claim 6, further comprising one or more grooves formed within the housing that substantially align with the lock passage when the lock is in the disengaged position.

8. The hand-held flossing device of Claim 7, wherein the floss passes through the lock passage, and tracks through the one or more grooves of the housing.

9. The hand-held flossing device of Claim 8, wherein the one or more grooves are out of alignment with the lock passage when the lock is in the engaged position, thereby inhibiting subsequent advancement of the floss through the passage.